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From: Bellenger, Gail
Sent: 2017-10-30T19:58:10-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: HITRR Open House Materials-updated
Received: 2017-10-30T19:58:58-04:00
[2017 FAQ FINAL.pdf](#)
[Final Open House Comment Form.pdf](#)
[Final Open House Boards reduced.pdf](#)

Hello, Team,

I went through the remainder of the comments from Matt and updated the boards, the FAQ sheet and the comment form (this one only had the due date added). Can you all please give these one final review before they get uploaded? If you have any comments, please let me know and I'll be sure to make the changes.

Thank you so much! Great meeting all of you last week.

Gail

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Gail Bellenger, M.A., RPA
Environmental Manager
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Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project

Comment Form

Please submit
comments by
November 9, 2017

Please Print Information Clearly

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Organization/Business (if applicable): _____ Title: _____

Garfield County and the Bureau of Land Management are seeking public input on the proposed Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project Environmental Assessment. The project supporting documents are available from the BLM's national NEPA register: <https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>. Please write legibly. If more space is needed, please use reverse side or attach additional sheets. If you would like to submit your comments electronically, please send them to Matt Betenson at BLM_UT_GS_comments@blm.gov.



WELCOME

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HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK ROAD REPAIR PROJECT-ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Background

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For over twenty years, Hole-in-the-Rock Road (HITRR) has been maintained by continuously using heavy equipment to flatten washboarding, construct wing ditches, repair muddy areas, and utilize spot graveling. The result is a deteriorated road condition which continues to widen and entrench, causing increased erosion on and around the road. This creates impassable muddy areas.

This project is to restore and repair the HITRR as a natural surface road that will improve driving safety and visitor experience, provide for better drainage, require less maintenance, and protect resources along the road.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), working with Garfield County, proposes to improve the shape of the road from Highway 12 to the Kane County boundary line, by:

- Restoring a crown and ditch road profile and providing improved drainage.
- Restoring the road to a consistent width of approximately 26 feet.
- Rehabilitating and revegetating all reclaimed areas.
- Grading adjacent slopes, which may be required to build a crown profile where entrenched.
- Evaluating culvert systems at ephemeral wash crossings for peak flow flood capacity.



Water collected at the side of the roadway



Alvey Wash. Large culverts fill with sediment during storm events



Stretch of muddy road where visitors have driven off the roadway



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Maintenance on the Road



The proposed project would repair the natural surface road, with gravel placed in problem areas. This grading and drainage project would result in a crown and ditch road bed that will help the road shed water and return it to a consistent width.

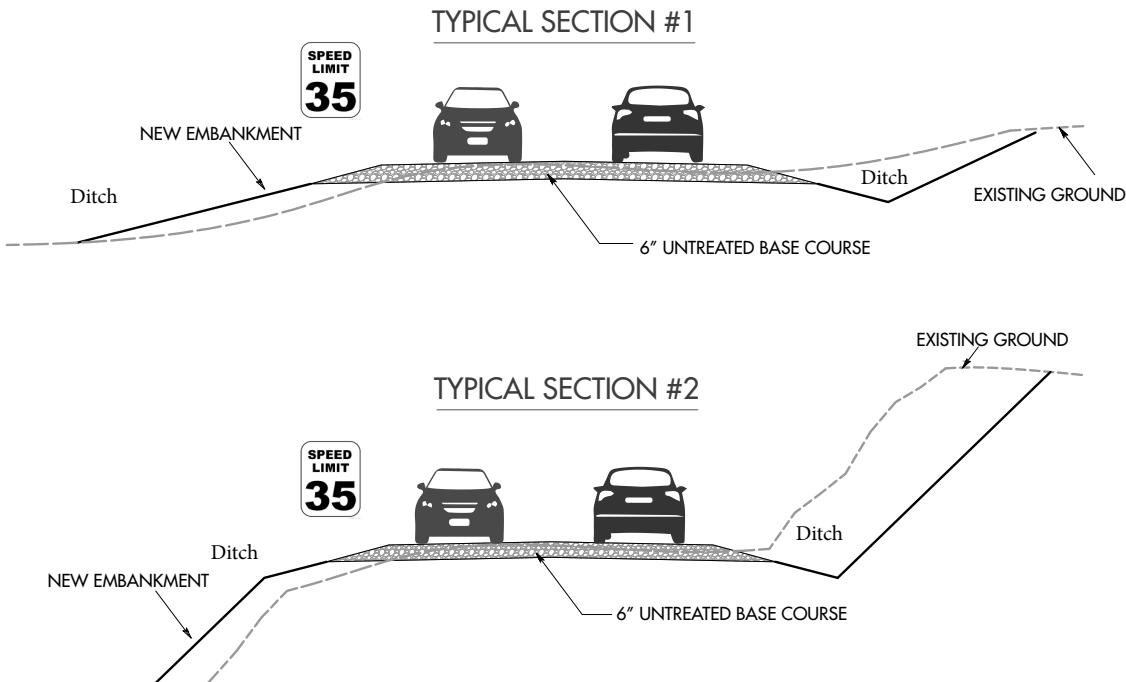
- Hole-in-the-Rock Road is currently graded approximately 20 times each summer, creating additional costs to Garfield County. Regular grading also causes degradation of the road base due to constant manipulation, which creates hazardous driving conditions for visitors.
- Heavy equipment will only be staged in previously disturbed areas.



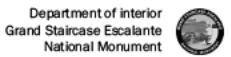
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Typical Cross Section

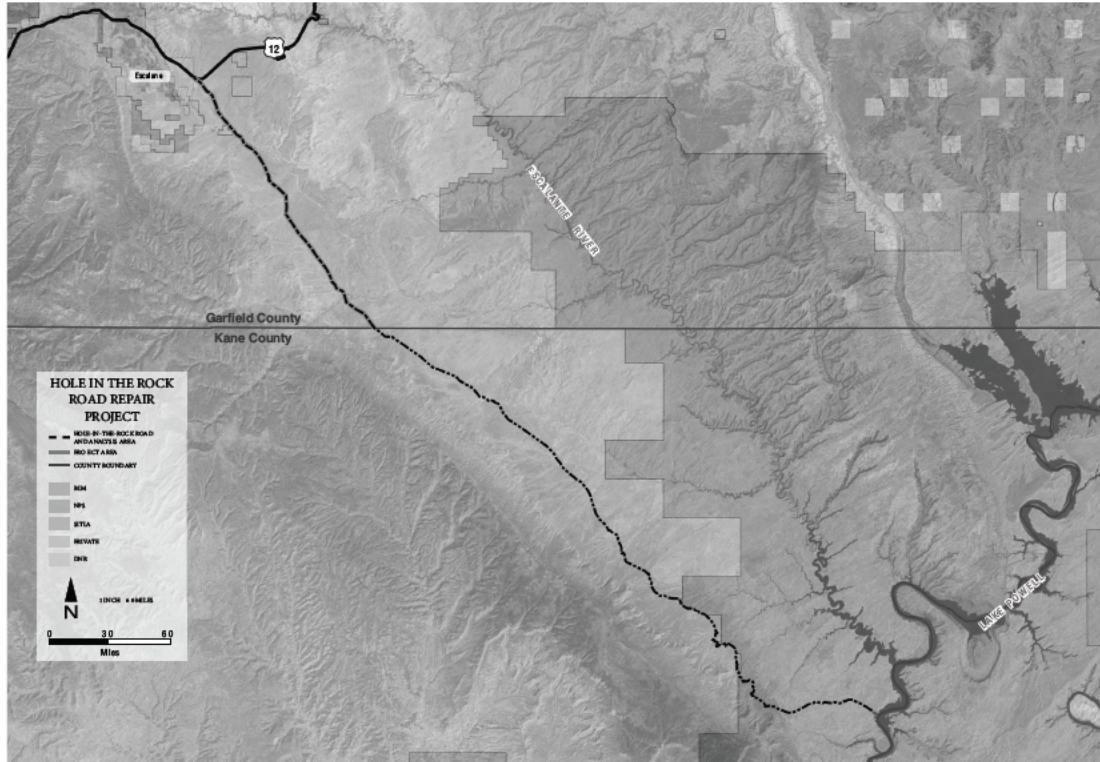
DESIGN STANDARDS:
SHOULDERS: 2 FT WIDE, TRAVEL LANES: 11 FT WIDE, DESIGN SPEED: 50 MPH



- Hole-in-the Rock Road is currently designed for 50+ mph for most of its length.
- This project would maintain the existing alignment, however, a 35 mph speed limit would continue to be posted along the road for safety considerations.



Project Corridor



- The proposed project will be in Garfield County only.
- A total of 23 culverted washes are located along Hole-in-the-Rock Road in Garfield County.
- Of the 23 culverted washes, 16 will be repaired, either with new culverts or modifications to existing culverts. Alvey Wash and Twentymile Wash have designs pending for new pipe culverts, pipe arch, or bridge structures to span the wash.



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Road Design Rendering

CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF REPAIRS



BEFORE



AFTER

- In locations where the road is deeply entrenched, adjacent slopes may need to be contoured and revegetated.

- Over time, vegetation will naturally move into the disturbed areas along the road.



BEFORE



AFTER



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Environmental Resources for Analysis



Devil's Garden, one of the many natural resources along the road.



Hole-in-the-Rock Trail marker.



Native American rock art.

The Hole in the Rock Road closely follows the route of the 1879 Hole in the Rock trek, an epic journey in which members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (LDS), also known as Mormons, established a more direct route across the Colorado River to the southeastern corner Utah in order to settle at Fort Bluff along the San Juan River.

This journey is noted in the GSENM Proclamation, “The monument has a long and dignified human history: it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West... Early Mormon pioneers left many historic objects....and built and traversed the renowned Hole in the Rock Trail as party of their epic colonization efforts.”

The project effect on many resources will be analyzed including vegetation, wildlife, soil, recreation, wilderness character, cultural resources and others.



The project includes analysis of impacts to the ecosystem. This includes soils, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, vegetation and water.



An example of an ephemeral wash along the road.



Pink prickly pear flower.

Indian paintbrush.



Greater short-horned lizard.

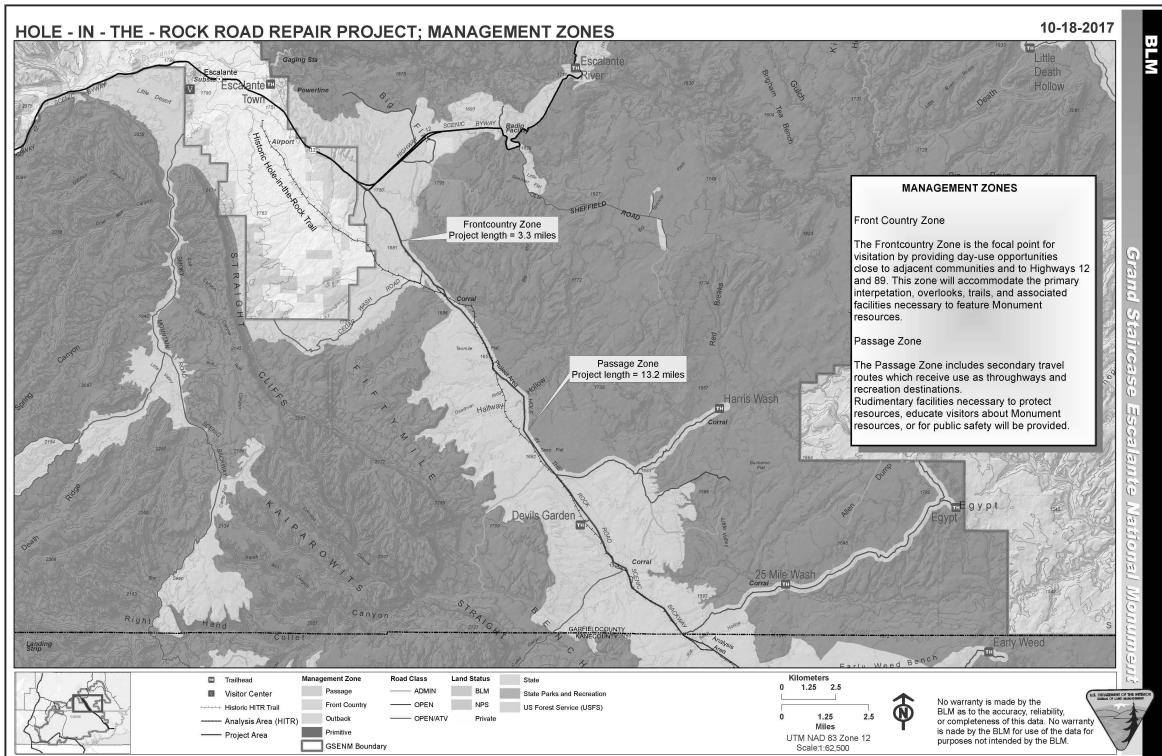


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Management Zones



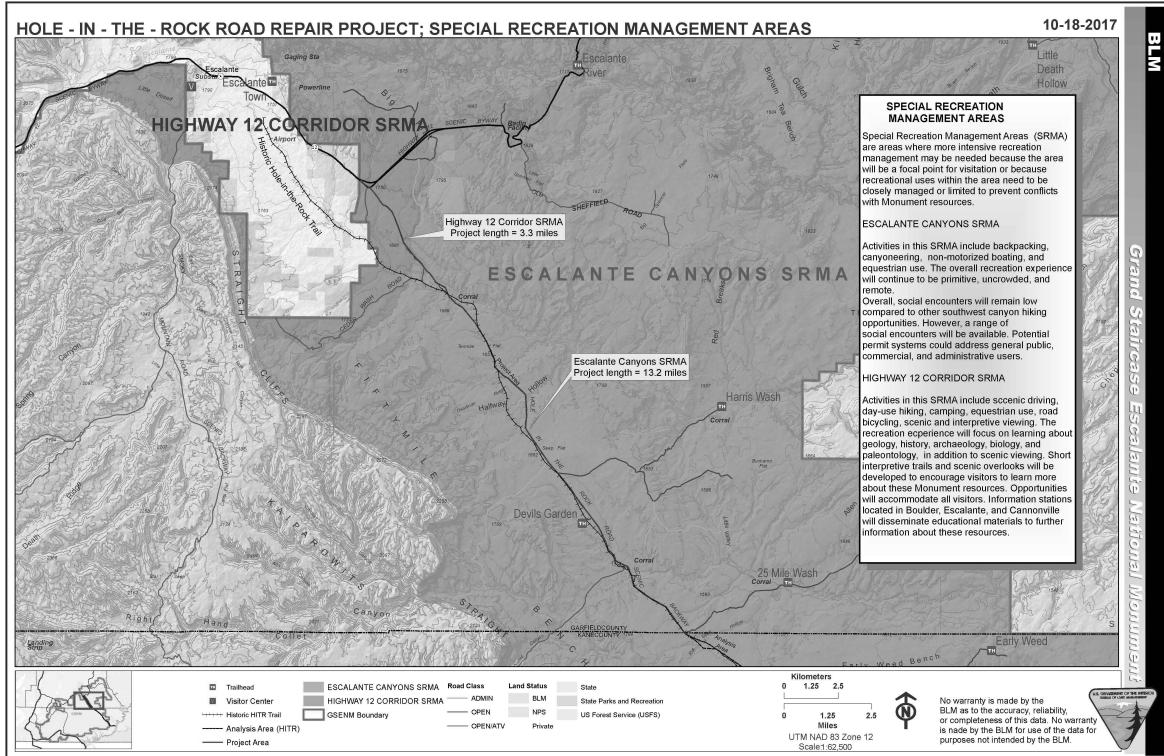


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Special Recreation Management Areas



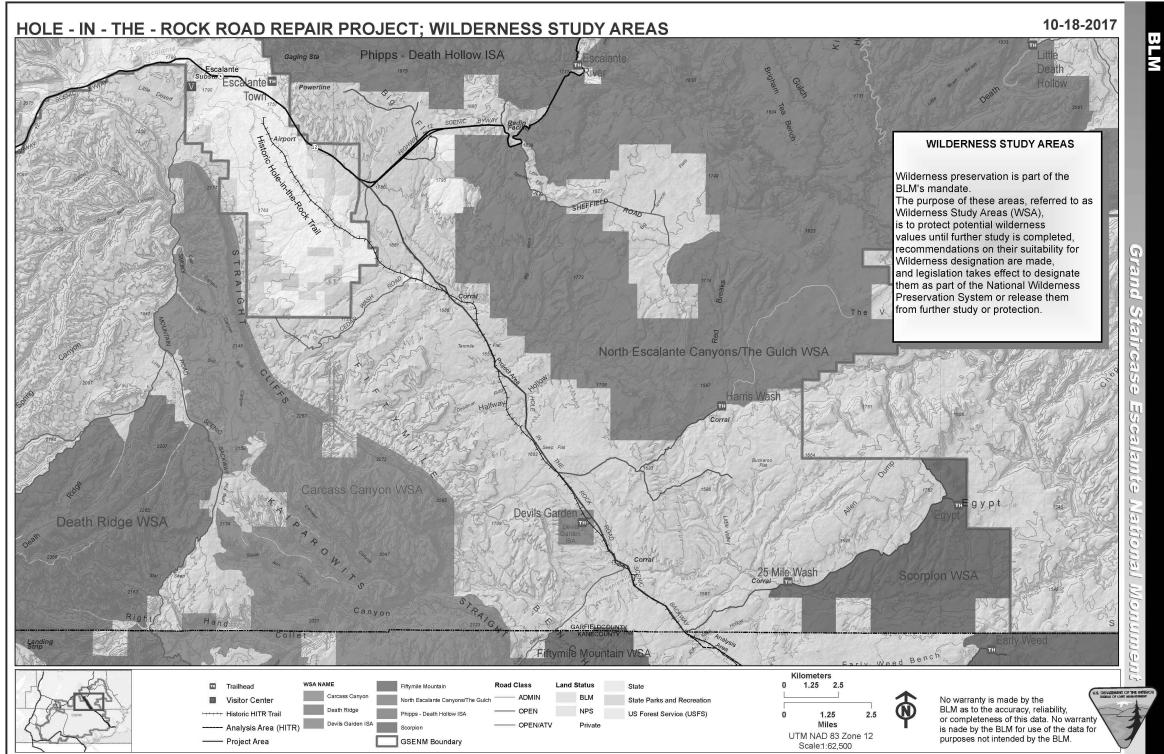


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Wilderness Study Areas

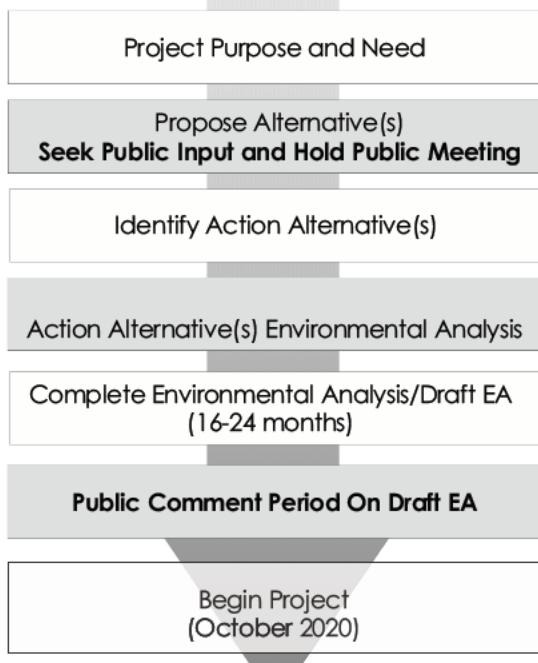




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Schedule & EA Process



Comment Process

- 1) Fill out a comment form at this meeting and submit it to the project team.
- 2) Submit a comment via email at
BLM UT GS comments@blm.gov
- 3) Mail comments to Matt Betenson, BLM Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, 669 S. Highway 89A, Kanab, UT 84741.

Please visit the project website for additional information.

<https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>

Comments should be received by

November 9, 2017



Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project

Frequently Asked Questions

The Hole in the Rock Road (HITRR), a State Scenic Backway, is located in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah, on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service. HITRR is a gravel and dirt road accessed via Utah State Route 12 between the towns of Escalante and Boulder, Utah. From the HITRR northern intersection with Utah State Route 12, the first 52 miles of the road are within GSENM with the last nine miles traversing Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) lands.

Why is work on the road happening?

Road repairs would enable effective long term maintenance and protect resources found along the project corridor. Hole in the Rock Road is maintained numerous times a year due to weather and traffic related needs. Over time this has resulted in deteriorating road conditions as the road continues to widen and entrench. Many segments of Hole in the Rock Road often become impassable due to inclement weather, which has created hazardous conditions. The BLM, working with Garfield County, is proposing to address issues such as road bed erosion, down cutting, and flooding at ephemeral washes.



Stretch of muddy road where visitors have driven off the roadway.



Natural surface of the road.



Large ephemeral wash.



Alvey Wash. Large culverts fill with sediment during storm events.

What type of changes are being made to the road?

The road will remain in the current alignment with no significant changes. A crown and ditch profile would be restored to the road to facilitate drainage and lessen future maintenance needs. A road surface of approximately 26 feet wide would be established. Some areas where the road is too wide would be reclaimed through revegetation. In locations where the road is deeply entrenched, adjacent slopes may need to be contoured and revegetated. Sections of the natural surface road may continue to be spot gravelled in problem areas. At wash crossings, the current culvert system will be evaluated for peak water flow demands and may be replaced or improved.

How often is the road closed?

The road closes several times a year during the monsoon season, mostly in Kane County, more often during major flooding events.

How many vehicles use the road each day?

On a daily average, more than 100 vehicles travel along the road.

What funds will be used for this project?

Garfield County, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and the BLM have teamed together to fund the project.

Will the road be closed during construction?

No, the road will remain open during construction activities. However, some short term delays will be likely.

What is the speed limit on the road?

A 35 mph speed limit will be posted along the road for safety considerations.



Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project

Frequently Asked Questions (con't)

However, the new road design will maintain the existing alignment, which is designed for a 50 mph speed limit.

Is this project compatible with the BLM's management plan?

Yes. This project conforms to the Management Plan's direction related to maintenance of roads, restoration, and revegetation objectives. Transportation maintenance decisions allow for routes to be maintained within the disturbed travel surface and specifically allow for stabilization of washout prone areas to prevent erosion and sediment loading in drainages on the Hole in the Rock Road.

Are the repairs also extending into Kane County?

No, Garfield County has the authority to work only within their county, and the project funding only accommodates work in Garfield County.

Are wash crossings going to be considered?

An array of water crossings will be analyzed during the environmental assessment process. Large floods in 2013 created huge safety hazards for the public at some locations.

Where will heavy equipment be staged?

All staging of heavy equipment will be in previously disturbed areas.

What is the time frame and duration of the project?

Preliminary engineering and environmental analysis will be completed in the next 16 to 24 months, with construction funding available in October 2020.

What are the next steps?

A draft Environmental Assessment will be prepared once environmental resources have been analyzed for impacts. Draft documents will be distributed for review in print and posted on the project website at:

<https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>

How can I make comments about the project?

Comments can be made at the public meetings, by letter to Matt Betenson, BLM Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, 669 S. Highway 89A, Kanab, UT 84741, or via email at BLM UT GS comments@blm.gov.

When are the public meetings?

Two public meetings are scheduled at this time. The first is at the Escalante Community Center on October 25th and the second is at the Boulder Community Center on October 26th. Both meetings are from 5-8pm.

Schedule & EA Process

Project Purpose and Need

Propose Alternative(s).
Seek Public Input and Hold Public Meeting

Identify Action Alternative(s)

Action Alternative(s) Environmental Analysis

Complete Environmental Analysis/
Draft EA
(16-24 months)

Public Comment Period On Draft EA

Begin Project
(October 2020)